



2005 Take Pride in America National Awardees Honored

At the end of September, our National Award winners gathered in Washington, DC to receive their 2005 Take Pride in America National Award. Over 140 recipients gathered, representing twenty five groups from sixteen different states to celebrate their accomplishments.

The activities began on Thursday, September 29, 2005 with a White House tour and a guided tour of the city's most famous monuments. Later, a reception was held in their honor at the White House Visitor Center, sponsored by Unilever, one of Take Pride's charter partners. Honorees and their guests mingled with Take Pride Partners and were welcomed by representatives of Unilever and the Department of the Interior. The guests enjoyed a preview of the new Public Service Announcements featuring Clint Eastwood, National Spokesperson for Take Pride in America.

The next morning began with a rooftop breakfast at the Department of the Interior and spectacular views of Washington, DC. Honorees then moved downstairs to the auditorium where they were greeted by Marti Allbright, Executive Director of the Take Pride program and a congratulatory video from Clint Eastwood. Next, they heard remarks from Desiree Sayle, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the USA Freedom Corps.

Secretary Gale A. Norton spoke to the recipients before presenting the awards to each group. Secretary Norton praised the volunteers saying, "You are Americans who are living their citizenship; patriots who are giving of themselves to make this Nation a brighter place...who rise above the essential duties of citizenship. You freely give your time. You willingly give your toil. You make this Nation great."

Winners were then invited on stage to receive their awards and have their photo taken with Secretary Norton, Marti Allbright and Desiree Sayle.

2005 Awards Reception





2005 Public Service Announcement Recognition



In addition to our highly regarded 2005 National Award Winners we had some of our champions of the Take Pride Public Service Announcement Campaign featuring Clint Eastwood present. They were given special recognition for their contributions to Take Pride. Among the recipients were partners, Motorcycle Industry Council, American Recreation Coalition, Unilever, Specialty Vehicle Industry Association, and Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

2005 National Award Winners

(in the order the Awards were presented)

Federal Land Manager



Energized!", designed to teach about energy and the role BLM lands play in meeting energy needs. Jeff has also assisted with the Interpretive Naturalist Certification Program of Alaska, which trains citizens to be better naturalists, interpreters and environmental educators.

Bureau of Land Management – Under the direction of **Jeff Brune**, the Bureau of Land Management's Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage, Alaska is a place for volunteers to work and learn. During seven distinct events, the science center brought together over 600 volunteers to work more than 4,000 hours. Volunteers worked on a variety of projects including trail maintenance, vegetation thinning for visitor safety, trail rerouting and painting. Because of Jeff's hard work, the science center also boasts a new interactive computer program called "Get

National Park Service – Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee can boast a volunteer program that actually needs a waiting list. And it doesn't take long to figure out why. **Superintendent Mark Woods** runs a volunteer program in Middlesboro, Kentucky that is personal. Mark greets new volunteers upon arrival, visits with them while on park duties, and encourages them to take ownership of the park and its resources. Last year, 268 volunteers generously donated 14,974 hours of their personal time to the park. Because of Mark's leadership, the team of volunteers at Cumberland Gap has maintained its 70 miles of trails and continues to add new trails to link over 500 miles of recreational space.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – With the help of **Mark Musaus**, the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Boynton Beach, Florida has incorporated science into the management of the refuge. Marks' leadership as the Refuge Manager has developed new partnerships and enhanced existing partnerships, built collaborative efforts with the University of Florida, the US Geological Survey and the South Florida Water Management District, and expanded the biological program between

biologists and other scientists to benefit the refuge overall. Working with partners, Mark has more than tripled the amount of funding for invasive exotics on Loxahatchee. Mark also serves on the Refuge System's National Mentor team to help the refuge's Friends Groups increase volunteer efforts on the refuge. As an instrumental part of revitalizing the public use program, now more than 300,000 visitors every year enjoy refreshed boat ramps, a 12-mile bike trail with scenic views and wildlife watching opportunities, National Fishing Day events, and the high school student program for environmental education field trips.

Bureau of Reclamation – As Program Manager of the South-Central California Area Office for the Bureau of Reclamation in Fresno, California, **Valerie J. Curley** has led several volunteer efforts in California's San Joaquin River Basin. Valerie coordinated with Catch a Special Thrill (CAST) in a September event where 40 disadvantaged or disabled children joined 150 volunteers for a day of fishing, boating and outdoor experience. Valerie also led several partnerships with local organizations to clean up the San Joaquin River. During one event, nearly 400 volunteers were able to remove over 54,000 lbs of trash from the river. Valerie has also coordinated groups such as the Sierra Club, East Fresno Rotary Club and California State University to improve the river.



U.S. Forest Service – Marsha Kearney, Forest Supervisor of the National Forests in Florida, has led the program in its efforts to build long-term partnerships and increase community commitment to the land and its resources. The 2004 Florida hurricane season left 1,180 miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail closed and in need of highly specialized repair skills. Rather than bringing in Forest Service employees to do the work, Marsha led Forest Service trainers in teaching community volunteers the needed skills. Because of this, the Florida Trail

Association met their hurricane recovery pledge of 60,000 volunteer hours. Marsha's leadership helped enhance volunteer capability and reinforce the partnership between the Florida Trail Association and the National Forests in Florida.

Individual

Darryll and Terri Wade of Ely, Nevada were instrumental in establishing the Nevada Heritage Stewardship Program. This program, a watchdog group for Nevada's desert lands, consists of over 150 volunteers working to monitor over sixty eight archeological sites. Darryll and Terri led eight basic training workshops for Site Stewards, organized the annual Site Steward Recognition event, chaired the Site Steward Committee, and managed the production of the Site Steward training manual and slide shows. They also worked closely with the Nevada Archaeological Association to establish the Tri-State Archaeology Education Group (Adopt-A-School) and develop a presentation kit for teachers. Earlier in 2005, Darryll and Terri were awarded the "Making a Difference Award" by the Bureau of Land Management.



While working for the USDA Forest Service in Boise, Idaho, **Dona Horan** noticed an immense amount of garbage in the Boise River during the peak visitors' season. Pulling 1,500 cans from the river in her spare time compelled Dona to begin RiverSweep, an annual river clean-up event. In 2002 and 2003, RiverSweep organized 800 volunteers to clean 6 miles of the river. In 2004, Dona expanded RiverSweep to a year-long educational campaign and fall river clean-up. Dona spoke at the Earth Day fair and collaborated with Boise State University's Service Learning

Program to enlist college students in the public awareness campaign. Her community outreach involved other local schools, newspapers, and television. The 2004 RiverSweep event brought together hundreds of citizens to clean the river, raised awareness of the river litter problem and assembled hundreds to assist in recycling the garbage collected.

Youth/ Youth Group

Girl Scout Troop 187 & 506, Heart of Ohio from New Concord, Ohio worked to enhance Camp Falls Run in the northwestern regions of Appalachia. By utilizing the site's natural setting and developing a progressive wildlife observation plan, the troops improved the area for Girls Scouts, families and the environment. The project, called Project FUN (Families Understanding Nature), included mitigating an area of forest eroded by the



construction of power lines; digging a wetland for plants and fish; constructing an observation deck, benches and birdhouses; and constructing an interpretive nature trail around the site. The Cadette/Senior Girl Scouts designated the trail as Tree Haven Trail and established an observation/rest area called Serenity Grove.

Elementary School Program

Education in the sciences couldn't get better for students at **Deer Creek Elementary School** in Edmond, Oklahoma. Principal Debbie Straughn led the school to partner with city, county, and Federal agencies to develop a 2-acre, outdoor learning laboratory called "Antlerville." The outdoor classroom is comprised of wetlands, butterfly and vegetable gardens, an amphitheater and a gazebo. It is designed for instructional purposes and community



involvement projects. During the last year, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program worked with the school to make the wetlands more inhabitable for wildlife and enjoyable for people. Paths and boardwalks over the wetlands were improved for disability access and erosion prevention. The Antlerville Outdoor Classroom stimulates curiosity and environmental education for students, as well as exposes environmental concerns such as wetlands, endangered ecosystems, and threatened wildlife.

Secondary School Program

The 11th and 12th graders in the **Rock Springs High School Environmental Science Class** in Green River, Wyoming were responsible for conducting and completing an inquiry-based environmental research study in the Jack Morrow Hills (JMH) of southwest Wyoming. JMH contains the largest desert elk herd and the largest active sand dune in North America, as well as plentiful reserves of natural resources, such as coal, oil and natural gas. The studies were designed to provide baseline data to be used in the classroom, as well as by state and Federal agencies in determining the environmental impact of further development in JMH. Through extensive habitat study and analysis, students collected data to assess possible environmental impacts to JMH, as well as make suggestions and recommendations for the use of the natural resources. When students were not in the field, they studied global environmental issues, read literature on JMH and learned how to write scientific reports. At the end of the school year, students presented power point presentations of their findings to all groups involved in the project, as well as their families.



Post-Secondary School Program



Students and their professor at **Des Moines Area Community College, Biology 172** in Des Moines, Iowa took their education outdoors, using their knowledge of biology to restore Oak Savanna communities, one of Iowa's most endangered habitats. Spending nearly 226 hours at one site, students cleared the understory of the forest, harvested local prairie seeds for future restoration projects, made recommendations for future work at the site and established two monitoring points for future research. At another site the students spent over 200 hours clearing parts of the land and identifying and removing invasive plants. Working closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at a third site, the class hosted an event where volunteers worked 69 hours to remove understory in the wilderness area.

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Non-profit Organization

Continental Divide Trail Alliance (CDTA) literally spreads volunteerism across the Nation. In 2004, CDTA coordinated, trained and educated 754 nationwide volunteers to build and improve 277 miles of the Continental Divide Trail that extends from Canada to Mexico. One program coordinated 42 projects from June to September where volunteers backpacked into remote locations in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico. The Adopt-A-Trail program committed volunteers to long-term maintenance of 5-10 mile trail segments. Another CDTA program, designed for the true adventurer, took volunteers to remote wilderness areas to plan the path for a new 18-in wide trail along the Divide.



Morris Land Conservancy's Partners for Parks is a volunteer stewardship program that coordinates parks, corporations and civic volunteers to work on projects in local parks throughout Northern New Jersey. In its nine years, Partners for Parks has completed 247 projects affecting over 16,000 acres of Federal, state, municipal and non-profit lands. Last year volunteers planted 2,310 plants; built 2,000 feet of fences, walkways and boardwalks; cleaned 2 tons of debris from watershed areas; removed 17 acres of invasive plants; groomed 5 miles of trails,

spread 175 yards of mulch; and landscaped public historic homes in 23 parks covering five counties. These projects involved 543 volunteers from 24 corporations and civic organizations, with a 78% annual retention rate. Partners for Parks' working relationship with over 60 park managers and 50 corporations facilitates this immense contribution to public lands.

Public/Private Partnership

Friends of Anahuac Refuge (FOAR) aims to support and enhance the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge along the upper Texas Gulf Coast in Chambers County, Texas. The refuge protects over 34,000 acres of coastal marsh and prairie and provides a habitat for migratory birds and other native fish and wildlife. Over the last year they designed and construction a 1.5-acre Butterfly and Hummingbird Landscape at the refuge. FOAR raised the funds needed for the project by securing enough donations from corporate and individual community partners to directly match a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. FOAR organized 115 volunteers who donated over 2,000 hours of services to construct an attractive trail system that wanders through the refuge and to grow and transplant native plants throughout the area. FOAR also developed an Adopt-A-Butterfly program, which commits community partners to long-term volunteer work on the refuge.





Volunteers with the **San Geronio Wilderness Association (SGWA)** are key to the protection and enhancement of the San Bernardino National Forest. Partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, SGWA recruits, trains, administers, supports and recognizes citizens who volunteer their valuable time for the forest. Last year, 110 SGWA volunteers donated 12,600 hours to serve over 100,000 forest visitors. Volunteers helped educate guests through publications, one-on-one conversations, amphitheater presentations, nature talks and a forest

festival. In addition to education, the SGWA volunteers provided 95 percent of the trail patrol services during the summer, restored the natural conditions of 71 abandoned fire ring sites, removed 74 large bags of litter, and reconditioned 10 miles of the Santa Ana River. Volunteers also provided lunch and fishing buddies to 80 disadvantaged children during a mountain lake fishing festival.

Through 25 partnering public and private organizations, the **Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary Restoration Project** in St. Paul, Minnesota has transformed a community eyesore into a unique urban open space, with recreational, cultural and natural benefits. The Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary is a 27-acre natural area adjacent to the Mississippi River and east of St. Paul. Over the last three years, the area degraded by industrial use has become a vibrant community asset. During the last year, the partners in the restoration project have created walking paths, implemented a treatment plan for on-site sacred Dakota Indian grounds, removed invasive plants and improved soil conditions. In the fall, the East Side Youth Conservation Corps and volunteers planted 50 trees, 35 shrubs and 9,000 plant plugs. Work continued in the spring as 3M employees planted and mulched 170 trees and shrubs, and 130 local school children planted 1,100 wetland plugs.



Corporation

As an upscale, award-winning tour company to national parks, **Tauk World Discovery**, based in Norwalk, Connecticut, found a way to give back to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks-its most popular tour route. Tauk arranges opportunities for guests visiting Yellowstone to donate one afternoon (three hours) to volunteer for various park projects. Each day they get business, they also get volunteers. Last year, 1,622 Tauk guests donated over



4,800 hours to dozens of Yellowstone projects. Volunteer accomplishments include light landscaping, rain runoff control, flood damage repair, completing a new walkway maintenance of tables, lamp posts and fencing, and general beautification. Tauck World Discovery partners with the Yellowstone National Park for project identification and oversight, and provides funding for a full-time, seasonal on-site volunteer coordinator, tools, supplies, and T-shirts for volunteers.



As title sponsor for National Public Lands Day for the seventh consecutive year, **Toyota Motor Sales, USA**, based in Torrance, California, has shown an exemplary donation of time, finances and volunteers toward caring for our public lands. About 2,000 Toyota employees volunteer their time every National Public Lands Day as an expression of the company's top-to-bottom environment commitment. Toyota's financial contributions are used to assist in and develop national coordination

efforts, outreach to potential volunteers, and manage the national program. In 2004, Toyota hosted 28 volunteer projects on sites throughout the United States. Employees volunteered in many different ways including building boardwalks, planting trees, picking up trash, renovating playgrounds, and painting fences.

Outstanding Take Pride Partner

Take Pride in America Gardens has **America the Beautiful Fund** to thank for providing \$1,000,000 worth of flower, vegetable and herb seeds to volunteers. The program offers people in cities, suburbs and rural areas a chance to make a difference in their own backyards and plant gardens for the public benefit. From June 2004 through June 2005, there were 2,240 Take Pride in America Gardens planted throughout all 50 states. These projects brought together more than 1,000,000 volunteers of all ages to clean up their neighborhood, plant community and school gardens, improve roadsides, Indian Reservations and historic sites, and grow more than six million pounds of food.



Local Government



In 2003, the **City of Colorado Springs** took the initiative to purchase Red Rock Canyon, a natural area covering 789 acres and in need of protection and preservation. Two years later, in support of the city's original goals to enhance the natural, visual and cultural value of the property, the City Forestry Department and the Trails, Open Space and Parks programs (TOPS) designated the annual Arbor Day Celebration as a Take Pride in America volunteer event in Red Rock Canyon. On May 7, 114 volunteers planted 2,800 seedlings trees and shrubs to re-vegetate part of the

canyon. The new plants were carefully landscaped to restore the area to its most natural appearance. Many volunteers who helped with the project now assist in taking care of the property.

State Event/Program

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection announced the new **Take Pride in Florida** program in October 2004 after the state suffered extensive damage from four major hurricanes. The program was initiated within three weeks, and on October 23, volunteers came to over 100 state and national parks, wildlife refuges, county parks, forests and watersheds to undertake projects. That day, 1,900 volunteers contributed 9,600 hours to clean up Florida's public lands. In addition, over 413,000 hours were pledged to



continue restoration during the next year. Soon Take Pride in Florida had a new website and a network of volunteer managers, comprised of public land managers who are ready to coordinate and expand volunteer work, without the need for additional staff or financial resources.



Beginning as a state-wide initiative in 1998, the **Texas Master Naturalist (TMN)** program seeks to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to natural resources throughout the state. Master Naturalists receive certification after completing 40 hours of basic training and providing at least 40 hours of volunteer service annually. Since start-up, TMN has gained 27 self-sufficient, volunteer-led chapters, three of

which were established in 2004. Other 2004 accomplishments include certifying 531 Master Naturalists; volunteering 104,543 hours on 20,697 acres of land; outreaching to 333,387 youth, adults and private landowners; and adding 19 new organizations to the list of partnerships. TMN has also implemented a 5,000 Hour Pin Award to an outstanding Master Naturalist.

Federal Volunteer Program

The Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) Program of the **Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park** extends across all 184.5 miles of the park from Cumberland, Maryland to Washington, D.C. Last year, the program grew from 1,847 volunteers to 2,396 volunteers, contributing an estimated value of \$840,041 to the park. The VIP program is guided by one staff person and managed by an intern across the park's five visitor centers. VIP engages youth, students and seniors in volunteering for the bike patrol program, administrative work in the visitor centers, as a campground host or a living history interpreter. With partnerships across multiple organizations, the VIP Program focused on recruiting students and senior citizens this past year. The rural western end of the park recruited local school environmental clubs and offered a program that fulfills community service requirements to complete 18 service projects using 58 volunteers for a total of 2,273 donated hours. The park received the 2004 National Capital Region's George B. Hartzog, Jr. Award for Outstanding Park Volunteer Program.



The **Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer Program** is a combination of the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service. While each agency maintains an independent volunteer program, they all come together under this united effort to create a stronger community impact and eliminate confusion between the agencies. The interagency program is funded by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act and administered by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Public Lands

Institute. Together, this group is "Get Outdoors Nevada" and they have established a community connection to volunteers throughout the region and recognize them for their total work across all four agencies. The program recruited over 585 volunteers who contributed a total of 2,955 hours in 2004. Conservation events included litter and debris clean-up, trail repair, habitat restoration, road restoration and planting. The program has increased commitment to stewardship of public land and will ultimately lead to a reduction in litter and desert dumping.